

AUSTRIA

EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

2018

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING LATEST STATISTICS



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

The [Act Amending the Aliens Law 2018](#) adopted legal changes across several migration areas. Among other things, it implemented the Students and Researchers Directive ((EU) 2016/801) in 2018. As a result, two new titles for temporary residence were instituted, one for researcher mobility and one for volunteers, and the evidence requirement for accommodation standards was dropped for foreigners applying for a student or research residence.

ECONOMIC MIGRATION

New regulations that entered into force at the beginning of 2018 expanded the list of shortage occupations for the employment of skilled workers from third countries, from 11 to 27. Furthermore, the points system to obtain a Red-White-Red Card¹ for other key workers was amended in December and entered into force at the beginning of 2019, introducing English language proficiency as a criterion and giving more weight to occupational experience and less to age, after a Constitutional Court ruling that found certain provisions governing the scheme to be discriminatory.

¹ The Red-White-Red Card scheme is a points-based immigration scheme for highly qualified third-country professionals

KEY POINTS



The Act Amending the Aliens Law 2018 was adopted, which included changes to legal and economic migration, international protection and citizenship.



One of the changes introduced by the above-mentioned law was that officials were now authorised to seize and analyse media storage in the possession of asylum seekers to determine their travel route.



A special policy focus was the return of third-country nationals staying in Austria irregularly. The rate of forced returns increased by 47 %.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

No relevant changes were reported in 2018.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

Several legislative acts relating to asylum and international protection were amended in 2018. As a result, officials are now authorised to seize and analyse media storage in the possession of asylum seekers to obtain information on their identities or travel routes.

The authorities are now also allowed to seize limited amounts of cash carried by asylum seekers to contribute to the material cost of their reception. A further change was also that an asylum application submitted by a foreign national now also automatically applies to each of that person's minor children residing in Austria.



UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

No significant changes were reported in 2018; however, two training events on conducting interviews with minors were organised and attended by 32 individuals.



INTEGRATION

An amendment to the School Organisation Act was introduced, providing for separate remedial German classes to support language acquisition for students who were unable to follow instruction at general compulsory schools, due to inadequate language proficiency.

An amendment was introduced to the Asylum Act allowing language courses to be approved to support integration of those asylum seekers deemed most likely to be recognised as refugees, based on the recognition rates of their country of origin.

In addition, promoting the integration of women with a migration background was a major policy focus during the year. In November 2018, the Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs expressed a commitment to expand integration programmes for women.²



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

The Citizenship Act was amended as part of the Act Amending the Aliens Law 2018, changing the residency requirement to be eligible to apply for citizenship for

² See, for example, Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Karin Kneissl: „Umsetzung des Integrationsgesetzes und die Förderung der Integration von Frauen mit Migrationshintergrund sind Prioritäten der Integrationsarbeit“. Press release, Vienna, 14 September 2018, available at

persons granted asylum to 10 consecutive years instead of the previous six years.



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

Temporary controls at the EU internal borders with Slovenia and Hungary were introduced on two occasions through a regulation issued by the Federal Minister of the Interior, initially from May until 11 November 2018, and then extended into 2019. In addition, the Border Control Act was amended in December 2018 to allow the director of a provincial police administration to empower non-public security service employees to issue orders and exercise force at Austrian international borders. The amendment was introduced as a result of the increased number of passengers at Vienna's International Airport to provide support for the border police.



IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

“Security and the fight against illegal immigration” was one of the three focus topics of the *Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union* between July and December 2018. At the national level, an aliens and border police unit was installed in each of the provinces' police administrations. Another change introduced with the Act Amending the Aliens Law 2018 was the possibility of imposing a fine or a prison sentence of a maximum of six weeks on persons unlawfully entering or staying in Austria.

The Federal Ministry of the Interior established a migration task force in June 2018 responsible for the ongoing evaluation of changes in migration flows. In addition, a structural model to support the centralised control of asylum and aliens' affairs (GAF) was implemented.

www.bmeia.gv.at/das-ministerium/presse/aussendungen/2018/09/karin-kneissl-umsetzung-des-integrationsgesetzes-und-die-foerderung-der-integration-von-frauen-mit-migrationshintergrund-sind-prioritaeten-der-integrationsarbeit/



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The Council of Ministers approved the [fifth Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking \(2018 – 2020\)](#) in October 2018, which was designed to reflect the changed situation since the increased immigration of 2015. The National Action Plan (NAP) singled out refugees and unaccompanied minors as groups potentially at risk. In accordance with the NAP, additional training and awareness-raising measures were held in 2018 for staff working at the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, the Federal Administrative Court, labour inspectorates and tax authorities, youth welfare authorities, the asylum reception and detention centres, as well as basic care providers and legal counsellors. The Austrian authorities further cooperated with other Member States to investigate and detect trafficking in human beings, as well as participating in a number of international strategic meetings on this issue.



RETURN AND READMISSION

A special policy focus in 2018 was the return of third-country nationals staying irregularly in Austria and specifically those whose asylum application had been rejected, with the rate of enforced removals rising by 47% (including Dublin transfers) and voluntary departures by 9 %.

In June 2018, Austria became a partner in the European return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN), in which it led the working group on harmonisation. Jointly with Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, Austria prepared the [internal guidelines](#) for harmonising forms and procedures regarding voluntary return and re-integration and started implementing pilot projects in the Russian Federation and Morocco. Also, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, together with the French Office for Immigration, launched a bilateral cooperation initiative, offering reintegration assistance to individuals of specific francophone states in Africa.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Austria on aspects of migration and international protection (2015-2018), including residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics are not yet available, this is indicated in the Annex as “N/A”.

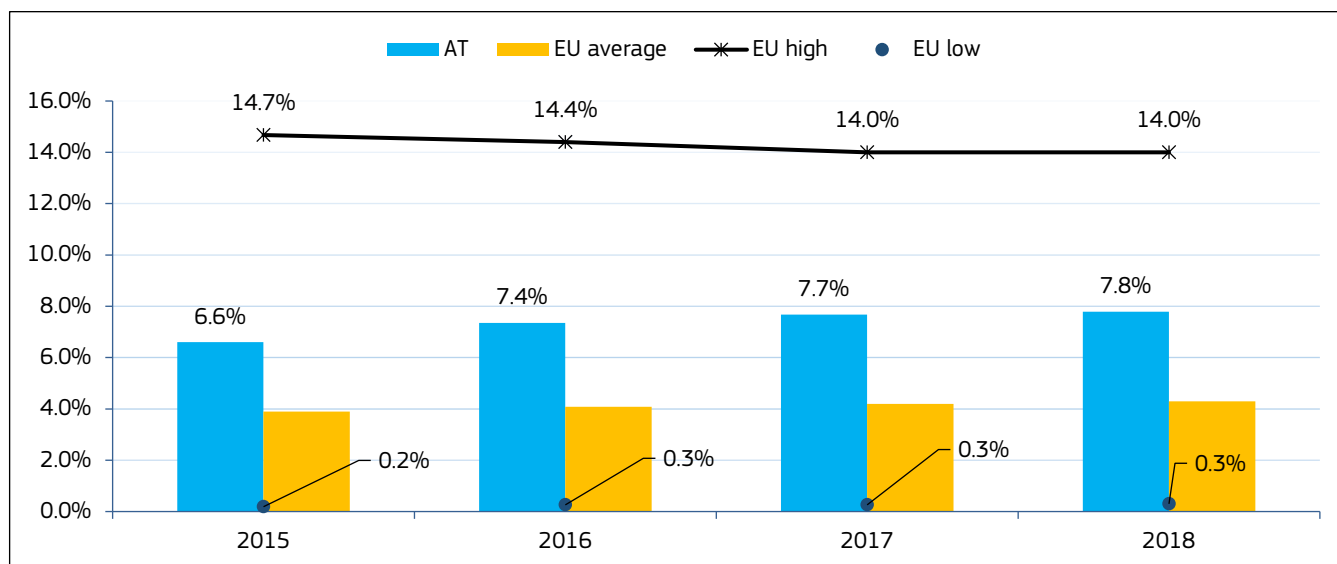
STATISTICAL ANNEX: MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN AUSTRIA (2015-2018)



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Eurostat data on first residence permits for 2018 was not available at the time of writing. Please consult the 2018 ARM Statistical Annex for statistics on the number of first residence permits by reason (to be published in July 2019).

Figure 1: Resident population of third-country nationals as a share of total population in Austria, EU average, EU high and low (2015-2018)

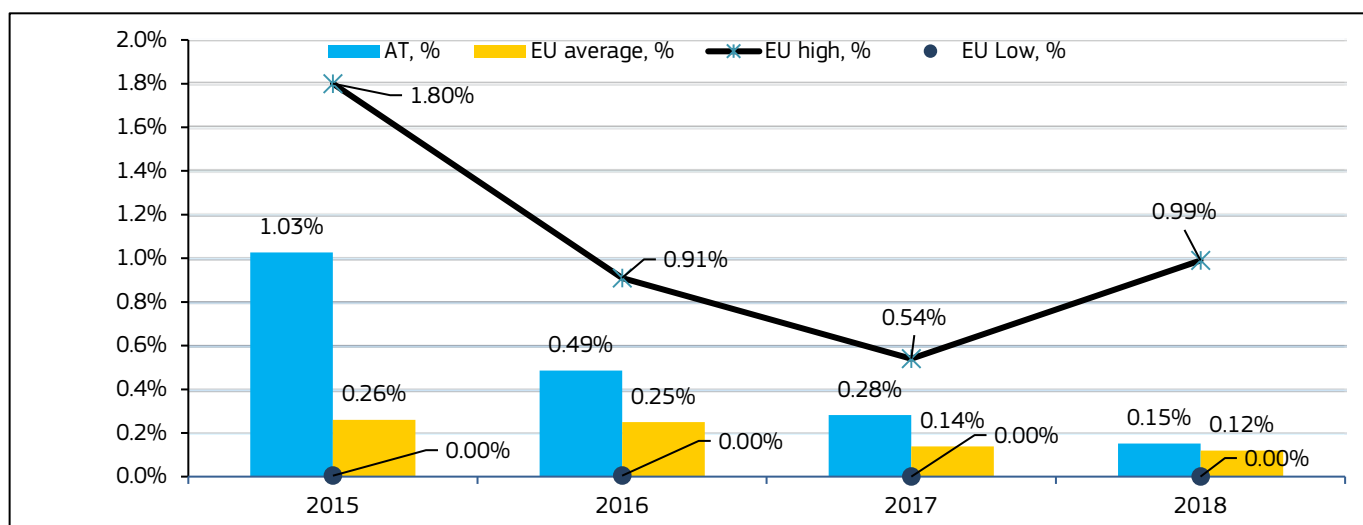


Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_pop1ctz](#)), data extracted 02.05.19



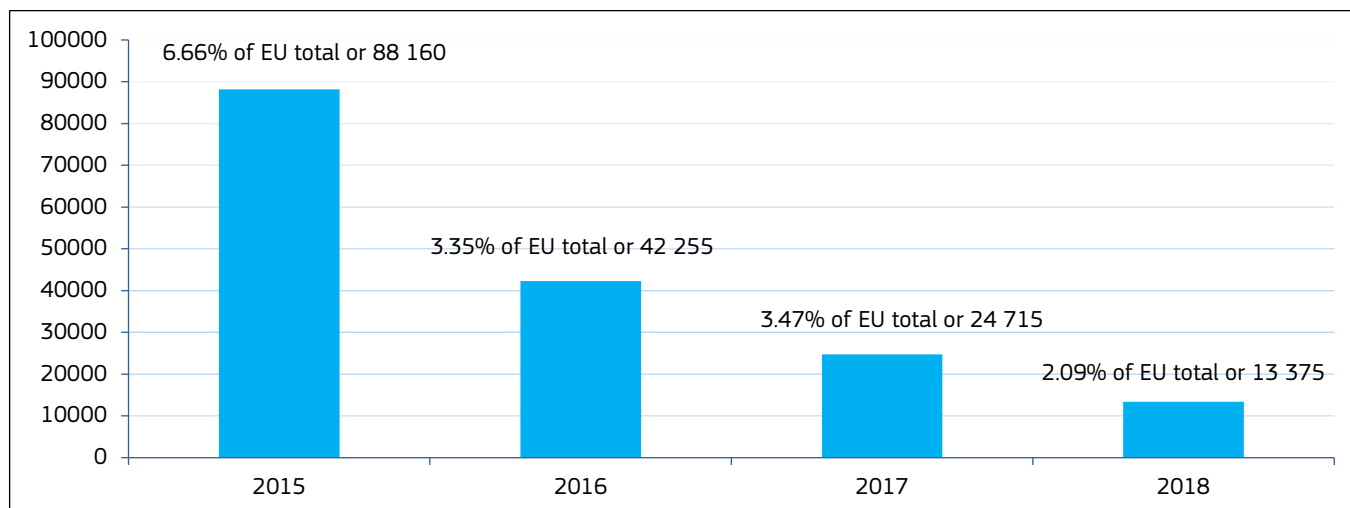
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AND ASYLUM

Figure 2: Asylum applications as a share of the total population in Austria, EU average and EU high and low (2015-2018)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 26.04.19

Figure 3: Number of asylum applications and as a share of the total number of applications in the EU (2015-2018)



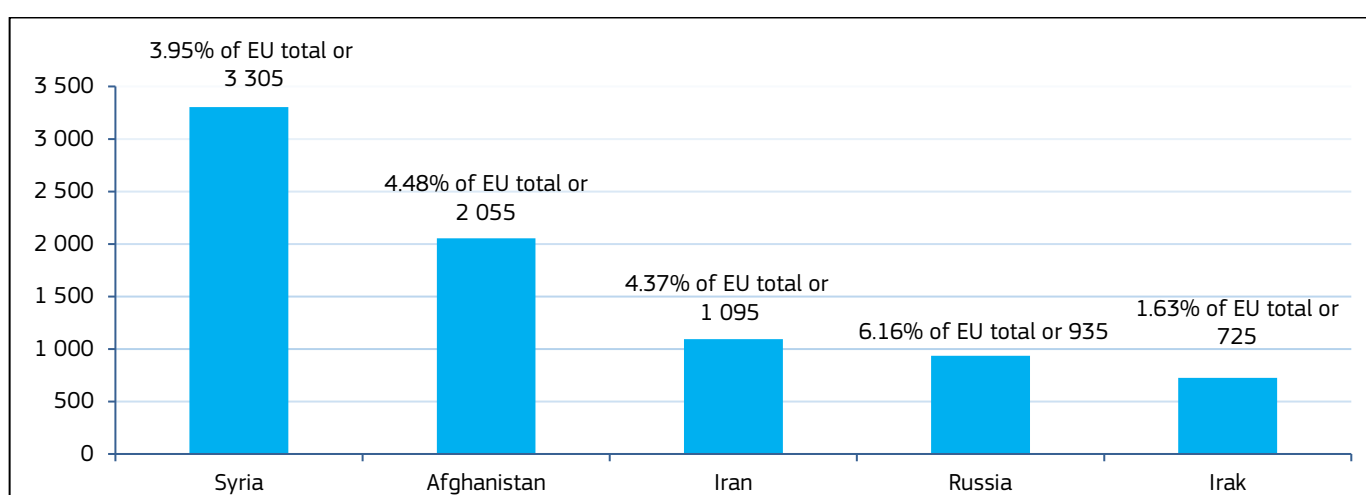
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 26.04.2019

Table 1: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities (2015-2018)

2015			2016			2017			2018		
Nationality	No.	% of total	Nationality	No.	% of total	Nationality	No.	% of total	Nationality	No.	% of total
Afghanistan	25 265	29%	Afghanistan	11 795	28%	Syria	7 355	30%	Syria	3 305	25%
Syria	25 015	28%	Syria	8 775	21%	Afghanistan	3 780	15%	Afghanistan	2 055	15%
Iraq	13 545	15%	Iraq	2 860	7%	Pakistan	1 575	6%	Iran	1 095	8%
Iran	3 430	4%	Pakistan	2 495	6%	Nigeria	1 405	6%	Russia	935	7%
Pakistan	3 035	3%	Iran	2 460	6%	Iraq	1 405	6%	Iraq	725	5%

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 29.04.2019

Figure 4: Asylum applications: Top five third-country nationalities as a share of EU total per given nationality (2018)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asyappctza](#)), data extracted 26.04.2019

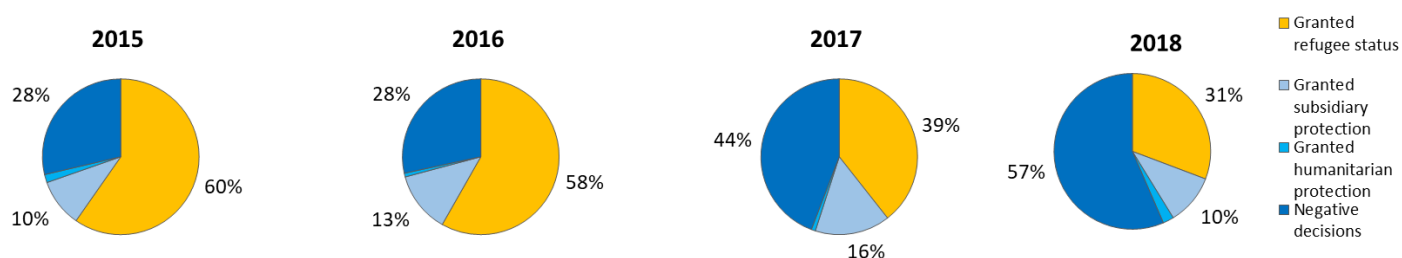
Note: the figure reads as: Austria received 3 305 asylum applications from Syria or 3.95% of all asylum applications launched by Syria in EU in 2018.

Table 2: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2015-2018)

	Total decisions	Positive decisions	Of which:		Humanitarian reasons	Negative decisions
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection		
2015	21 095	15 045	12 590	2 100	355	6 050
2016	42 415	30 370	24 685	5 355	330	12 045
2017	45 160	25 200	17 800	7 015	385	19 960
2018	34 525	15 020	10 620	3 620	780	19 500

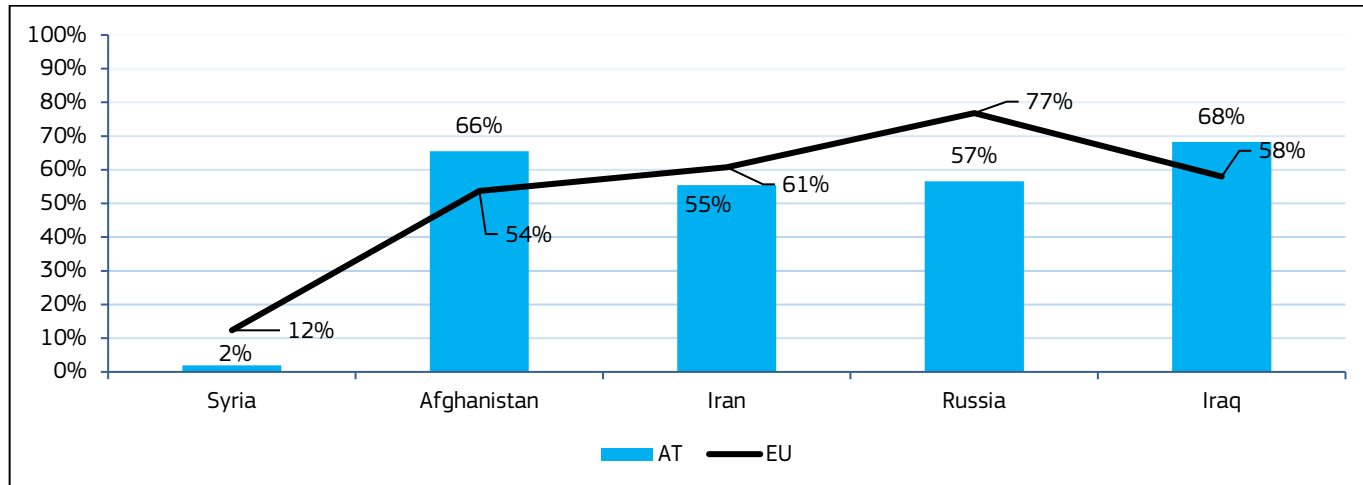
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asycdfsta](#)), data extracted 29.04.2019

Figure 5: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2015-2018)



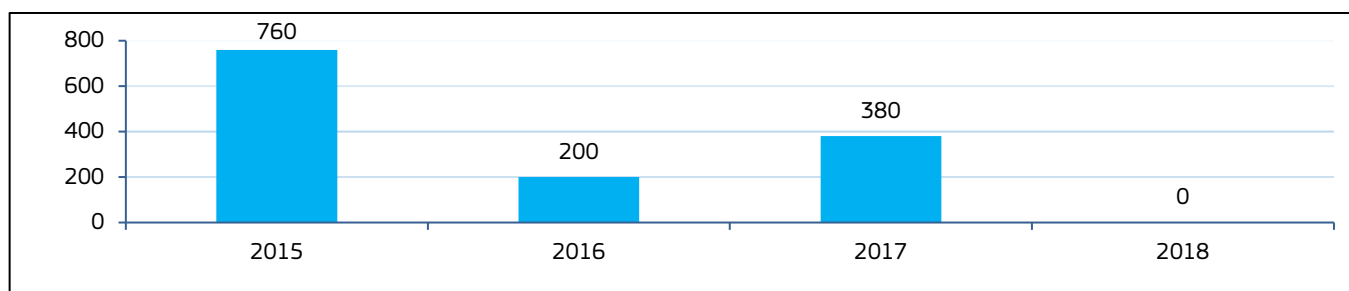
Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asycdfsta](#)), data extracted 30.04.19

Figure 6: Negative decision rate for the top five nationalities of applicants at the first instance in comparison with EU for the same given nationality (2018)



Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([migr_asycdfsta](#)), data extracted 30.04.19

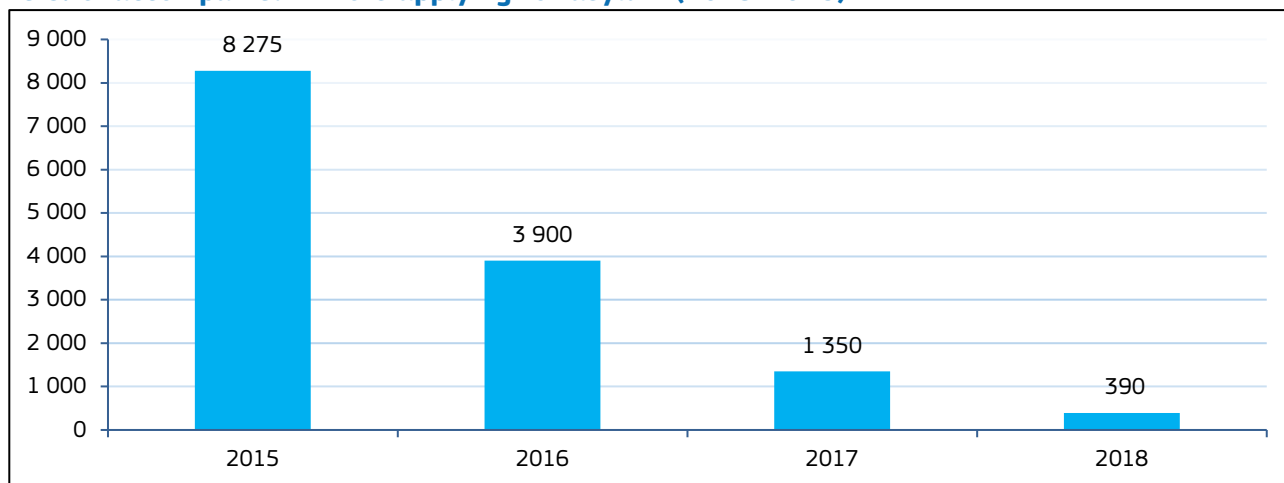
Figure 7: Third-country nationals resettled (2015-2018)





UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Figure 8: Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum (2015-2018)



Source: Eurostat Asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors by citizenship, age and sex Annual data (rounded) ([migr_asyunaa](#)), data extracted 02.05.19.



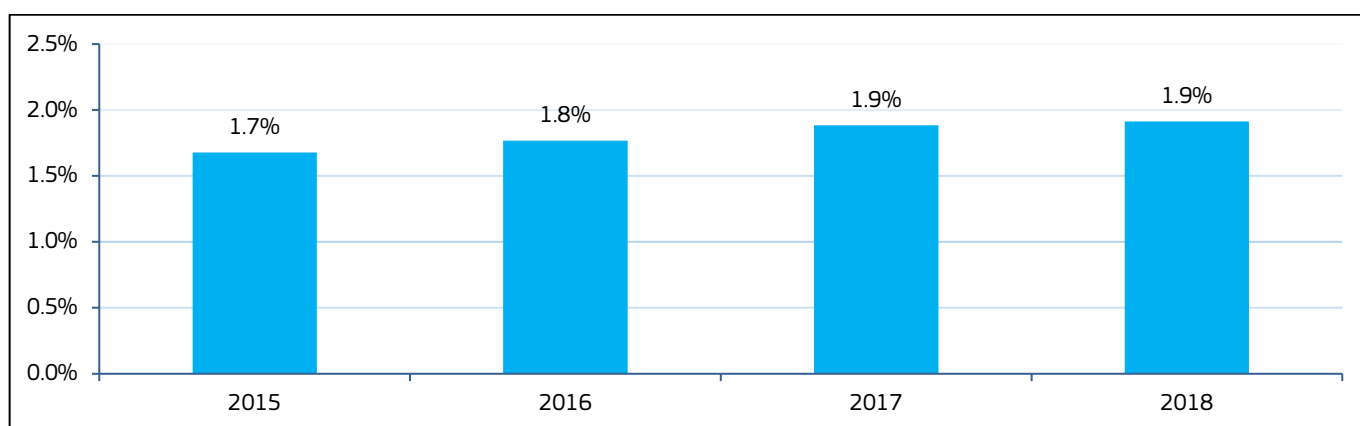
BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISA

Table 3: Number of Schengen visas applications (2015–2018)

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Uniform visas (short-stay visas)	259 167	268 388	304 556	306 133

Source: DG Migration and Home – Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States

Figure 9: Uniform visa applications received in Austria as a share of the total number of uniform visa applications in all Schengen states consulates (2015-2018)



Source: DG Migration and Home Affairs – Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States

Table 4: Top five countries in which the highest number of visa applications for Austria was lodged (2015-2018)

2015		2016		2017		2018	
Country	Number	Country	Number	Country	Number	Country	Number
Russian Federation	45 020	China	63 469	China	69 948	China	81 402
China	36 705	Russian Federation	38 617	Russian Federation	43 826	Russian Federation	40 262
Turkey	22 896	Turkey	40 105	India	31 045	India	36 820
Ukraine	19 583	India	26 844	Thailand	19 266	Thailand	21 487
India	19 368	Ukraine	22 472	Ukraine	19 007	Turkey	18 510

Source: DG Migration and Home Affairs - Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States



IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Table 5: Number of third-country nationals refused entry at external borders, found to be illegally present, ordered to leave and returned following an order to leave (2015-2018)

Third-country nationals:	2015	2016	2017	2018
Refused entry at external borders	560	460	740	400
Found to be illegally present	86 220	49 810	26 660	18 840
Ordered to leave	9 910	11 850	8 850	10 690
Returned following an order to leave	5 275	6 095	6 115	7 405

Source: Eurostat migration statistics ([\(migr_eirfs\)](#)[\(migr_eipre\)](#)[\(migr_eiord\)](#)[\(migr_eirtn\)](#)) data extracted 03.05.2019



RETURN

Table 6: Third-country nationals returned (2015-2018)

Year	Returned as part of forced return measure	Returned voluntarily	Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
2015	829	4 491	3 671
2016	891	5 247	4 338
2017	1 727	4 413	3 141
2018	2 593	5 134	3 235

Source: EMN Austria